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## **Secretary Gassman Awards Injury Prevention Grant to St. Vincent Hospital**

**Governor Doyle's *Safe Lifting Initiative* will help health care workers avoid back injuries**

**Green Bay** – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today announced that St. Vincent Hospital in Green Bay will receive a \$20,000 grant as part of Governor Jim Doyle's *Safe Lift Initiative* to help nurses and other health care workers avoid injuries when moving patients.

"St. Vincent provides valuable services in meeting health care needs of residents of northeast Wisconsin," Secretary Gassman said. "This grant will help employees continue this essential care by preventing injuries on the job. The back injuries nurses may suffer when moving patients can end careers and undermine patient care."

According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, six of the top ten occupations at highest risk for back injuries are in health care. Depending on the severity, such injuries can sideline workers temporarily or end their careers entirely. The risk of injuries can also discourage others from nursing or other health care careers and these combined factors can increase the cost of worker's compensation and health care overall.

Governor Doyle developed the *Safe Lifting Initiative* as part of Grow Wisconsin, his comprehensive plan for economic and workforce development. Other grants will be announced in the near future. A total of \$325,000 in federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) money is funding the demonstration projects.

The demonstration projects were selected with guidance from the Select Committee on Health Care Workforce Development. The committee's mission is to identify and help implement top-priority, immediate and long-term strategies for addressing health care worker shortages in Wisconsin.

St. Vincent Hospital serves the communities of greater Green Bay, northeast Wisconsin and upper Michigan. The hospital will use the funding to train 1,051 employees on the proper operation of safe lifting equipment.

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